

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing amendments is respectfully requested.

Summary of Amendments

Upon entry of the present amendments, claims 1-15 are canceled and new claims 16-32 are added, whereby claims 16-32 will be pending, with claims 16 and 23 being independent claims.

New claim 16 differs from claim 1 essentially in that it additionally recites language from canceled claim 4, while new claim 23 differs from claim 1 essentially in that it additionally recites language from canceled claims 6 and 9. Dependent claims 17-22 correspond generally, in the given order, to claims 5, 7, 8 and 12-14, and dependent claims 24-32 correspond generally, in the given order, to claims 2, 3, 7, 8 and 10-14.

Applicants point out that the cancellation to claims 1-15 is without prejudice or disclaimer, and Applicants expressly reserve the right to prosecute the canceled claims in one or more continuation and/or divisional applications.

Summary of Office Action

As an initial matter, Applicants note with appreciation that a signed and initialed copy of the Form PTO-1449 submitted in the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement filed June 22, 2005 has been returned together with the present Office Action. Applicants are filing concurrently herewith a Second Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement, and consideration thereof is respectfully requested as well.

Applicants also note with appreciation that claims 4, 5 and 9-11 are indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants further note that the claim rejections in the previous Office Action are not repeated in the instant Office Action.

Claims 1, 2, 6-8 and 12-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by DE 10039144 (hereafter "DE'144").

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over DE'144.

Response to Office Action

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the present rejections are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Response to Rejection of Claims over DE'144

Claims 1, 2, 6-8 and 12-15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by DE'144 and claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over DE'144.

Applicants note that independent claims 16 and 23 submitted herewith correspond generally to a combination of canceled claims 1 and 4 and canceled claims 1, 6 and 9, respectively. Since claims 4 and 9 have been indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form, claims 16 and 23 (and claims 17-22 and 24-32 dependent therefrom) are assumed to be allowable, wherefore no further comments in

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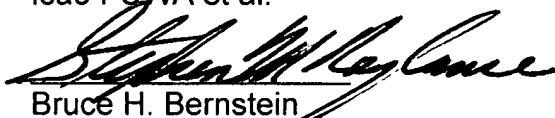
this regard appear to be necessary. Accordingly, withdrawal of the claim rejections over DE'144 is warranted and respectfully requested.

Applicants point out that the cancellation of claims 1-15 is not to be construed as Applicants' admission that the claim rejections over DE'144 are meritorious. Applicants earnestly believe that DE'144 neither anticipates nor renders obvious the subject matter of any of claims 1-15, and have canceled these claims merely in order to expedite the issuance of a patent on the basis of the claims submitted herewith. As noted above, Applicants expressly reserve the right to prosecute claims 1-15 in one or more divisional and/or continuation applications.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. If any issues yet remain which can be resolved by a telephone conference, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,
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